



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EXPLORING USAID FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TRAINING MODULE

SLIDE 1: Welcome to Exploring USAID Funding Opportunities

Welcome to the “Exploring USAID Funding Opportunities” training module in the “How to work with USAID” training series.

This module follows the “Understanding USAID Awards” module. It is for organizations with limited to no experience working with USAID. It is designed to help organizations identify funding opportunities and ways to partner with USAID.

SLIDE 2: Learning Objectives

In this module, you will learn:

- How to identify USAID’s priorities and areas of work;
- How to find information about Agency strategies and programs that align with your organization;
- What types of USAID partnership opportunities are available;
- And how to research current and upcoming funding opportunities.

We will mention a number of resources throughout this module and will provide website links at the end so you can continue exploring USAID funding opportunities.

SLIDE 3: Definitions

Before we begin, let us review some basic terms we will use in this module.

- A **partnership** is a collaboration that leverages the skills, assets, technologies, and resources of USAID and its partners from the public, private, academic, and nonprofit sectors.

- An **award** is an instrument the Agency uses to partner with an organization. Each award confirms how a partner should use those funds. Every award is the foundation of a partnership with USAID.
- A **solicitation or notice of funding opportunity** is a process the Agency uses to seek proposals, applications, or information from potential partners.
- A **Mission** is a USAID overseas operating unit that manages programming in a country or region.
- A **Bureau** is a USAID operating unit that manages a major global role or function.
- **Assistance** is when USAID awards funds to a recipient organization to achieve a public good. Assistance awards are made through grants and cooperative agreements. To be considered, you submit an application.
- **Acquisition** is when USAID purchases or procures goods and services from a contractor. The Activity is implemented under the direction of the Agency. To be considered, you submit a proposal.

SLIDE 4: Why Is It Important for USAID to Partner?

Why is it important for USAID to partner with organizations? The answer is in its mission.

- The U.S. Agency for International Development leads the U.S. Government's international development and disaster assistance through partnerships and investments that save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance, and help people emerge from humanitarian crises and progress beyond assistance.
- Through funding, USAID partners with thousands of organizations around the world that share and can contribute to the Agency's development goals.

These partners include non-governmental organizations, for-profit companies and U.S. small businesses, charitable organizations, universities, internationally based national groups, community and faith-based organizations, and more. USAID works with more than 3,000 different organizations each year.

The Agency uses competitive selection processes to identify and select award recipients and contractors. To successfully compete, you need to research information about USAID, track funding opportunities, and learn about newly released funding opportunities. This module will help.

The Agency also wants to learn from organizations such as yours, because your feedback helps improve its strategies and priorities.

Exploring partnerships with USAID can take time and effort, but your effort helps you identify and pursue opportunities that fit both the Agency's and your organization's goals.

SLIDE 5: USAID Priorities [*GRAPHIC*]

Before discussing steps you will follow to explore USAID funding opportunities, we will share some basic information about the Agency.

U-S-A-I-D works in several technical sectors, including agriculture, economic growth, environment, education, democracy, human rights, governance, women's empowerment, water and sanitation, and global health.

The Agency applies broad global approaches and strategies in each sector. However, the country or regional Mission determines which of these technical areas to prioritize based on local needs and available resources. Later in this module, you will learn how to find information about these approaches and strategies.

SLIDE 6: Where USAID Works [*MAP*]

USAID funds activities in more than 100 countries and organizes its programs in five regions of the world: Africa, Asia, Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. USAID does not work in the United States.

Overseas, the Agency conducts its work in more than 80 national and regional Missions. You can use this [interactive map](#) to explore USAID Mission locations and learn more about some of their activities.

More than 3,000 people work with USAID in the United States, and more than 6,000 people work with the Agency overseas. Although some overseas staff are from the United States, many more come from the local countries.

In the United States, USAID works within Bureaus of three different types:

- First are the *geographic bureaus*—one for each of the five regions;
- Second are *technical bureaus* that oversee core focus areas;
- And third are *functional bureaus* that oversee key management functions.

Missions and Bureaus offer many different opportunities for you to work with USAID.

Next, we will explain how to research specific funding opportunities and determine which may be right for your organization.

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SLIDE 7: Exploring Opportunities

Organizations can work with USAID through a number of different pathways or funding opportunities—and information about those pathways is found in different places. In this section, we share some of the most important ways to explore these pathways, so you can decide which is best for you.

SLIDE 8: How To Explore Opportunities

To explore funding opportunities with USAID, you will take four main steps:

- First, learn about the Agency's priorities and strategies in different countries, as well as its core focus areas, and think about where your work best aligns with USAID;
- Second, check the USAID Business Forecast for opportunities you should monitor;
- Third, research “rolling” funding opportunities you should consider applying for;
- And fourth, track “open” opportunities, so you can compete for those that are a good fit for your organization.

As you learn more about potential pathways to working with USAID, you might take these steps in sequence or take more than one step simultaneously. In some cases, you may take the same step more than once.

Now, let us discuss each of these steps in more detail.

SLIDE 9: STEP 1: Priorities and Strategies

Step one is to better understand USAID's priorities and its planning process. USAID is looking to partner with organizations that can support its mission and its long-term development plans in each country. USAID's long-term plans may or may not fit within your organization's scope or purpose, so understanding the Agency's priorities can help you determine if you are a good fit to partner.

Start by reviewing the Agency's Strategy and Planning website. You can then narrow your research to the geographic and technical areas you are most interested in.

Look for information that helps you understand Agency activities and priorities in the countries where you hope to work:

- **Mission websites** provide information about USAID history and current activities in each country. Follow the links for each region to access the websites for individual country Missions.

- A **Country Development Cooperation Strategy** (or CDCS) outlines which technical sectors a Mission has prioritized every three to five years. CDCSs are an important resource to help you understand where your organization might align with those priorities.
- Next, **USAID’s “What We Do” web page** provides links to help you research policies, strategies, and visions for the technical sectors relevant to your organization.

These resources will help you identify the Missions and Bureaus most likely to offer promising partnership opportunities for your organization.

SLIDE 10: USAID’s Planning Cycle

As you research priorities and strategies of the Missions and Bureaus, keep in mind, at any given time, USAID is working on programming across *four* different fiscal years. For example, if it is currently fiscal year (or FY) 2021, USAID is:

- Reporting on FY 2020 results achieved;
- Implementing the FY 2021 budget;
- Justifying the FY 2022 budget to the U.S. Congress;
- And planning the FY 2023 budget.

This means Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs) and other planning documents sometimes include funding opportunities that span a couple of years.

For that reason, you must respond immediately to some opportunities if you want to be considered. For other opportunities, you might plan to apply in the coming year or even in two years.

Here’s a tip: Begin your research at least 6 to 12 months before you hope to apply for and receive a USAID award.

SLIDE 11: STEP 2: Check the Business Forecast

Step two is to check the USAID Business Forecast, a real-time, searchable database of funding opportunities in the planning stages across all USAID Missions and Bureaus.

- Check this database at least monthly. Search for upcoming funding opportunities based on the countries and focus areas you have prioritized.
- You can follow specific funding opportunities for changes or updates, and then more frequently, weekly, as the release date gets closer.

- Then begin making plans to respond to a funding opportunity when it opens. For example, you will probably need to assess your organization’s capacity to implement the Activity, identify staff or consultants to conduct assessments and prepare proposal documents, and contact other organizations to discuss potential partnerships.

Quarterly “Business Forecast and Partner Update” webinars allow USAID to answer questions and provide helpful information to potential partners like you. Sign up for the USAID “Industry Liaison” listserv to receive webinar notifications and instructions for submitting questions. Your questions can be general, about USAID programs and processes, or about specific opportunities shared in the forecast.

There are other ways to keep in touch about USAID’s funding opportunities. Follow @USAIDBizOps on Twitter, join the “Work with USAID” LinkedIn group, and register your organization on WorkwithUSAID.org. It is also helpful to join professional networks such as Interaction and InsideNGO, as well as country- and sector-specific groups, which often share useful information about upcoming opportunities.

With this second step—staying informed—you will be better prepared when opportunities become available.

SLIDE 12: STEP 3: Research Rolling Funding Opportunities

Step three is to research rolling funding opportunities. These have a rolling or an ongoing application deadline and focus on broad areas of interest, rather than specifically defined programs or activities.

Two of the most common types of rolling funding opportunities are Annual Program Statements or APSs and Broad Agency Announcements or BAAs:

- APSs invite concept papers, through an addendum or round, on a broad topic. They are typically available for one year. Concept papers are short proposals or “pitches” that are sought at different times through the year. For the APS, the Agency selects the best concept papers to continue on to a second-stage application process.
- BAAs seek innovative ideas in response to a particular challenge or need. BAAs provide an opportunity for you to work with USAID in a “co-creation” process to develop ideas with other partners.

Here are some examples of funding opportunities that offer rolling possibilities to respond:

- Opportunities from the **New Partnerships Initiative** (or NPI) focus on new or underutilized partners. These opportunities are listed on the NPI “Funding Opportunities” page.

- In regions where USAID operates, a program called **Local Works** accepts *unsolicited* applications from organizations to help them lead their country's development. In addition, this office releases a "Locally-Led Development" APS.
- The **Development Innovation Ventures** (or DIV) program tests and scales creative solutions for global development challenges. Through the DIV Annual Program Statements—usually released once a year—you can apply on a rolling basis to find and pursue innovations in any sector or country where USAID works.
- **Global Development Alliances** (or GDAs) are partnerships between USAID and the private sector to develop and implement market-based approaches to solve development challenges. Through the Global Development Alliance APS, you can submit concept papers describing your ideas for potential private sector partnerships. You can find these annual APSs at Grants.gov, which we will discuss later in the module.

Some rolling funding opportunities allow partners to submit concept notes directly. Other opportunities accept concept notes only through documents called addenda, which define specific opportunities under the funding announcement. Later in this module, you will see examples of addenda used in a case study.

SLIDE 13: **STEP 4: Track Open Funding Opportunities**

"Open" funding opportunities usually have shorter response turnaround times compared to rolling funding opportunities—often four to six weeks—and are usually more narrowly defined. Open funding opportunities typically take two forms:

- USAID announces open acquisition opportunities for contracts at beta.SAM.gov. These announcements are called Requests for Proposals or RFPs.
- An open announcement for an assistance opportunity for grants and cooperative agreements is called a Notice of Funding Opportunity, NOFO, or Requests for Applications (RFAs). These are announced at Grants.gov.

You can learn more about the differences between acquisition and assistance opportunities in the training module titled "Understanding USAID Awards."

When you are searching for solicitations on Grants-dot-gov or beta.SAM.dot.gov, remember:

- Both systems are used by all U.S. Government funding agencies—you can start your search by filtering for USAID funding opportunities;
- You can further narrow your search by filtering for country, technical focus area, or USAID operating unit;
- And, both "rolling" and "open" funding opportunities appear on these lists.

Later in this module, we will talk about things to consider when tracking funding opportunities on the Agency's Business Forecast and when a funding opportunity appears on Grants.gov or beta.SAM.gov.

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SLIDE 14: How USAID Works with Partners

Now that we have reviewed the process for finding USAID opportunities—and the differences between rolling and open funding opportunities—let us discuss how these opportunities work and how organizations can participate in the Agency's award process.

SLIDE 15: USAID's Funding Process [GRAPHIC]

Because USAID's funding comes from the American people, the Agency must use the funds in a focused and strategic way.

This is how the Agency funds its work:

- The Agency's funding comes from the American people;
- Then, agency staff work with Congress and the Executive Office of the President to determine budget priorities;
- Then, Congress sets the Agency's funding levels;
- Next, as we said earlier in this module, USAID Missions and Offices develop country strategies to identify specific programs and activities. These are explained in Country Development Cooperation Strategies, CDCSs;
- And, finally, organizations compete for USAID funds by responding to funding opportunities.

You can learn more about working with the Agency in a webinar titled "How to Work with USAID."

SLIDE 16: Collaborative Approaches

The Agency is committed to developing partnerships based on shared goals and objectives—in other words, collaboration.

Through a process called co-creation, USAID brings together potential partners to collaborate on solutions to development problems. Some co-creation efforts lead to funded awards. Other co-creation efforts provide partners with the chance to build relationships with USAID and other organizations based on their shared interests and priorities.

USAID encourages partnership and collaboration in two common ways beyond funding awards.

- First, often preceding a funding opportunity, Requests for Information (or RFIs) and market research activities, are intended to gather ideas from organizations to help the Agency plan its Activities.
- Second, stakeholder consultations bring together organizations with relevant knowledge for discussions that can inform USAID's plans. These consultations may be announced on Grants.gov and beta.SAM.gov, publicized on Mission and operating unit websites, and shared through various networks or associations.

You can use these opportunities to:

- Interact with USAID;
- Deepen your understanding of the Agency's work;
- And demonstrate your organization's knowledge and capacity.

SLIDE 17: USAID and Small Businesses

USAID's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, OSDBU, is dedicated to promoting the use of U.S. small businesses in procurement.

This office:

- Negotiates small-business funding goals with the U.S. Small Business Administration for prime awards and sub-awards;
- And works with USAID Bureaus, independent offices, and Missions to negotiate individual small-business goals.

You can learn more about the Agency's small-business goals by visiting USAID's "Small Business" website at [USAID.gov](https://www.usaid.gov/small-business).

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SLIDE 18: How to Make Strategic Choices

Now that we have reviewed USAID's funding process, we will share some advice to help you make strategic choices about whether to pursue funding opportunities once you have identified them.

SLIDE 19: The "Go/No-Go" Decision

Imagine your exploration of USAID has led you to a funding opportunity that aligns with your organization's goals and priorities. It is important to carefully consider whether it makes sense to apply. Many organizations refer to this choice as the "go/no-go" decision. It is based on your strategic analysis

of the funding opportunity, your organization's ability to respond, and your likelihood of success.

To assess whether you should pursue a funding opportunity, consider these facts:

- First, you should know it takes time, effort, and resources to develop a proposal or application for funding. You may need to conduct research or field assessments, and you will need staff or consultants to work on the proposal.
- Second, consider that your efforts may require diverting resources from other priorities. In other words, there may be opportunity costs to pursuing a funding opportunity. You may need to shift time and resources from other organizational priorities and allocate them to responding to a funding opportunity. You must ask yourself if other organizational commitments can be realistically put on hold as you respond to a funding opportunity.
- Finally, USAID funding opportunities are highly competitive. Even with a strong proposal or application submission, there is a chance you will not receive the award.

Your chances of success depend on many factors, including the type of opportunity you choose to pursue, how well your organization meets the selection criteria, how strong your application or proposal is, and which other organizations apply.

SLIDE 20: Are You Ready to Respond? (1 of 4)

Here are a few questions to consider, to help you strategically analyze whether your organization is ready to respond to a funding opportunity and make a “go/no-go” decision:

- Does your organization have the capacity to successfully implement the award?
- Does your organization have the ability to submit your response by the deadline?
- And ... how competitive will your organization be compared to other organizations that are likely to apply?

Let's examine what is involved with each of these questions.

SLIDE 21: Are You Ready to Respond? (2 of 4)

- First, does your organization have the capacity to successfully implement the award?
The most important questions to ask yourself in this category are:
 - Do you have the right technical expertise? If you and your existing team do not have the right expertise, will it be possible for you to hire the right people to assist?
 - Another capacity question is, have you worked in the geographic area before—long enough to work there successfully on the new project or projects?

- Next, ask yourself: Do you have the experience and management systems to implement the Activity at the scale envisioned in the announcement for the funding opportunity? Having strong management systems in place will improve your chances of successfully managing a USAID award.

SLIDE 22: Are You Ready to Respond? (3 of 4)

- In addition to asking yourself questions of capacity, you must ask, “Does your organization have the ability to submit required documents by the deadline?” For example, do you have:
 - The time and ability to do assessments or research;
 - Experts available to ensure technical soundness of your Activity design;
 - A strong writer to create the proposal or application narrative;
 - And finance staff who are able to research costs and develop the budget?

SLIDE 23: Are You Ready to Respond (4 of 4)

The final strategic question you must ask yourself to decide whether you can successfully compete for an award is, “How prepared is your organization to meet and maintain USAID compliance?” This may include questions such as:

- Is your organization registered to work with the U.S. Government? Do you have a DUNS number, a CAGE or NCAGE code, and are you registered with the U.S. Government System for Award Management?
- Do you have a sound plan for risk management and financial reporting?
- Are you familiar with the standard provisions that accompany USAID funding?

SLIDE 24: Submission Logistics

While you are deciding whether to respond to a funding opportunity, keep these things in mind about the process:

- Most funding opportunities have an “open question period” when you may send questions to USAID. After that period, the questions and the Agency’s answers are shared publicly.
- Take time during this open question period to clarify details and help inform your “go/no-go” decision.
- Note that when a funding opportunity is active, USAID staff are not allowed to discuss it directly with potential partners. This ensures that all potential applicants receive the

same information and no one is given an unfair advantage.

Remember: Even if you can answer all of these questions positively, there is never a guarantee of receiving funds. Even with strong qualifications and an excellent proposal, the award may be given to someone else. But, you may decide to make a “go” decision for another reason.

SLIDE 25: A “Go” Decision

The ideal “go” decision is one where responding to the funding opportunity has value, even if your proposal or application does not win. Going through the experience of developing a responsive proposal or application gives you the opportunity to:

- Learn about the process and better prepare for future funding opportunities;
- Present your organization and your ideas to USAID;
- And gain valuable feedback, so you can be more competitive in the future.

These are all possible benefits of applying for a USAID funding opportunity, regardless of whether you win.

You can learn more in the USAID training module titled, “Effectively Responding to USAID Funding Opportunities.”

SLIDE 26: Partnering with Other Organizations

What if your organization has some, but not all, of the required qualifications for a funding opportunity? Maybe you have the technical expertise but not the operational capacity? Or you have experience, but not in the required geographic area.

These are all good reasons to consider partnering with other organizations in what is called a sub-award.

Partnering with a larger or a more experienced organization is a great way for smaller or newer organizations to learn about USAID programming.

Partnering often happens when a consortium or group of organizations wins a large award. One partner, often called the “prime” partner or recipient, leads the effort, incorporating one or more sub-partners in the proposal and budget. A sub-partner is called a “sub-contractor” with an acquisition award and a “sub-awardee” with an assistance award.

Here are a few things you can do to explore working as a sub-partner with a lead or “prime” recipient on a specific funding opportunity:

- Identify your organization’s value, or niche, within the funding opportunity;
- Research organizations likely to be prime partners and contact them to discuss a

possible partnership;

- And negotiate a role within the consortium, then sign a “teaming agreement.”

You can learn more about pursuing sub-awards in USAID’s “Sub-Partnerships” training module.

SLIDE 27: A “No-Go” Decision

You may have good reasons for making a strategic “no-go” decision. For example, it might help avoid an unwise use of resources to pursue an award you are unlikely to win. At the same time, a “no-go” decision may point you to steps your organization can take to prepare for the next opportunity.

Exploring a funding opportunity can show you that your organization needs to:

- Build technical expertise and capacity in areas of interest to USAID;
- Improve operational systems, such as reporting and accounting software;
- Assess new geographic areas targeted by USAID that your organization should become more familiar with;
- Or develop the ability to prepare competitive proposals or applications—maybe by training staff members or identifying consultants who can help.

You might consider shifting your priorities to better align with USAID’s strategies. Some organizations do this, considering both the costs and potential benefits to determine if it is worthwhile to make the shift.

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SLIDE 28: Five Case Studies

We’ve covered the basic steps you must take to learn about opportunities to partner with USAID. And we’ve reviewed some questions to ask as you consider whether to apply for a funding opportunity.

Now, we will share five case studies to illustrate how to apply these steps as you explore USAID funding. These examples illustrate the different types of opportunities you might find and the different pathways to funding and working with the Agency. All of the examples focus on a single country context: Ghana.

SLIDE 29: USAID In Ghana [GRAPHIC]

This is a screenshot of the Ghana Mission website. As you can see in the list to the left, USAID works in several sectors in the country. Let’s follow five fictitious organizations as they explore funding opportunities to partner with USAID in Ghana.

Slide 30: Five Fictitious Organizations in Ghana

- Organization A is a Ghanaian nonprofit with a mission to improve the health of citizens by providing education and training on healthy behaviors.
- Organization B is a Ghanaian business association that helps its small-business members access critical skills and services to succeed and grow.
- Organization C is a regional start-up that develops innovative products to help farmers in West Africa protect crops from pests.
- Organization D is an international consulting firm in fisheries management. It has worked elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa and is interested in expanding into Ghana.
- Organization E is an international consortium of universities and research organizations specializing in the study of agroecological system sustainability in Ghana.

Let us imagine that all of these organizations checked the Mission website, found that USAID works in their areas of interest, and have now decided to explore further using the menu on the left of the Mission homepage. First, they explore the Mission's current activities.

SLIDE 31: USAID's Strategy In Ghana [GRAPHIC]

After learning about USAID's current activities on the Ghana Mission web page, the organizations can read about the Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (or CDCS). This helps them begin to understand the Mission's plans and goals.

You can see an overall goal at the top, plus three development objectives. Under each objective are its related results that explain exactly what the Mission is hoping to achieve.

SLIDE 32: Search the Business Forecast [GRAPHIC]

Organization A, the Ghanaian nonprofit working on healthy behaviors, saw in the Ghana Mission's CDCS that one of USAID's goals is to improve health services delivery.

The organization's executive director wants to find out if there are any planned activities related to this goal, so she searches the Mission's Business Forecast. First, under Operating Unit, she checks "Ghana." Then, under Sector, she checks "Global Health" and "Water and Sanitation." Once those selections are made, then she clicks on "Search the Business Forecast."

SLIDE 33: Identify Opportunities [GRAPHIC]

The Executive Director's search returns six different funding opportunities. Of these, she found

two that matched well with her organization's mission and experience.

The first, shown at the top left, is called "Accelerating Social and Behavior Change." This funding opportunity is expected to be released, or opened for applications, in less than two months. She realizes the award is too large for her organization to handle alone, but she knows she and her team would be a valuable partner for larger organizations because of her organization's regional experience and strong ties to local government and other community organizations. So, she reaches out to larger organizations that are doing good work in the health sector and asks about the possibility of partnering as a sub-awardee.

The second funding opportunity in her Business Forecast search results is called the "Enhancing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (or "WASH") Activity," shown here at the bottom right. The anticipated release date has passed, but the award is expected to result in a cooperative agreement, so the Executive Director goes to Grants.gov to learn more. She cannot find the announcement listed, so she submits a question about the status of the funding opportunity.

Back on the main Business Forecast web page, the Organization A team makes sure to note the date of the next quarterly "Business Forecast and Partner Update" webinar, so staff can plan to attend. The team also signs up for the USAID "Industry Liaison" listserv, so they can receive notifications on when the projects' question-and-answer sections will be available to review.

In this way, the organization monitors updates and gathers additional information about the two opportunities.

SLIDE 34: Respond To Addenda [GRAPHIC]

Another group, Organization B, takes a slightly different path to researching opportunities. This Ghanaian business association begins by searching posted opportunities at Grants.gov (shown here at the top left), using the keyword "Ghana" to filter for all USAID funding opportunities in Ghana. The organization had learned in a previous search that clicking "Ghana" in the Mission box below the operating unit returns only Mission-based funding opportunities and not the full array of USAID partnership possibilities in Ghana.

That is why, to find *all* potential funding opportunities for Ghana, both from the Mission and other USAID operating units, Organization B uses the country name as a key word in the search *and* selects "Ghana" in the Mission box. The new search reveals a number of funding opportunities, including "Locally-Led Development," which is underlined here in "red".

SLIDE 35: Respond to Addenda

Organization B then clicks the "Opportunity Number" and is taken to the grant opportunity page, where the team finds the related Annual Program Statement, or APS. To see the full APS,

the team clicks on the “Related Documents” tab.

In the APS document, the team reads that, under this APS, it can respond to specific documents called “addenda.” You may recall that some funding opportunities accept concept notes through addenda, which define specific “rounds” or possibilities under the “rolling” funding opportunity.

The organization finds that several addenda have been released, including one that appears to be an ideal fit. It is titled, “Call for Locally-Led Development Concepts on Building Effective, Reliable, and Sustainable Private Sector Associations in West Africa.”

Organization B knows it already has an effective model for running an association of small businesses. After carefully reviewing the addendum, the team decides it can develop a strong concept to submit to USAID, and it begins working on the application.

SLIDE 36: Research by Sector [GRAPHIC]

Meanwhile, Organizations C, D, and E are researching USAID Ghana’s work in the agriculture and food security sector.

By clicking on that sector on the Mission website’s main page, they find that Ghana is a Feed the Future “Priority Country.” This means USAID’s work in Ghana is part of a larger U.S. Government agriculture strategy.

From the Mission’s “Agriculture and Food Security” page, they link to this Feed the Future Ghana web page, where they find links to helpful documents, such as the “Feed the Future West Africa Regional Plan” and the “Feed the Future Country Plan for Ghana.”

Back on the USAID website, the teams check the Business Forecast and identify future funding opportunities they believe they should follow. All three organizations decide to search Grants.gov and beta.SAM.gov for current opportunities.

SLIDE 37: Draft Notice of Funding Opportunity [GRAPHIC]

Organization C is the regional start-up with products to help farmers protect crops from pests. This organization goes to Grants.gov, clicks the “Search Grants” tab, enters “Ghana” as a keyword, and, under Agency, filters for “All Agency for International Development.” One of the results is a draft Notice of Funding Opportunity, or NOFO, that looks interesting.

The team had read about Feed the Future innovation labs, and this draft NOFO describes a plan to create a new “Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops.”

The synopsis page for the draft NOFO, which is not shown on this slide, lists some questions from USAID about this in-progress opportunity listing:

- First, the Agency asks, are the theory of change and programmatic objectives listed in the draft NOFO clear and realistic? How could they be improved?
- Next, it asks, does the draft program description provide potential implementers with sufficient information and guidance about USAID's overall objectives and expectations?
- Finally, in the synopsis, the Agency asks, how can USAID and partners work more effectively with local actors and institutions to achieve meaningful, sustainable progress?

Organization C submits thoughtful responses to these questions to help USAID improve its plans. The answers also make the Agency aware of the organization.

Then, because the organization recognizes it would be a good partner for larger organizations that apply for the award, it begins exploring possible sub-partnerships by talking with other organizations and networking with experts.

SLIDE 38: Form a Consortium [GRAPHIC]

Meanwhile, Organization D, the consulting firm specializing in fisheries management and hoping to expand into Ghana, finds an interesting opportunity on [beta.SAM.gov](#).

It uses the drop-down option “Contract Opportunities” next to the Search box, filters with the keyword “Ghana,” and finds the “Feed the Future Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity.”

Organization D's niche expertise in small fisheries is relevant for this solicitation, but the team knows that understanding the Ghana context would be essential. Team members immediately begin contacting organizations already working in Ghana fisheries to see if they can form a consortium to collectively apply for this opportunity.

SLIDE 39: Respond to BAAs [GRAPHIC]

Organization E, the consortium studying agroecological system sustainability, is another of our fictional applicants that finds a relevant opportunity on [Grants.gov](#). At the website, a consortium representative checks “All Agency for International Development” to filter USAID opportunities, and then he searches with the keyword “Ghana.”

He finds a Broad Agency Announcement, or BAA, called “Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa,” that is focused on supporting “innovative applied research to address development challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa.

By clicking through to the synopsis page, the consortium representative finds that this BAA is not directly open to applications. Rather, USAID will release individual addenda.

The team clicks on the “Opportunity Number” and then opens the “Related Documents” tab to see the first addendum—it is titled “Research Initiative on Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management in Africa.” The funding opportunity has been released. The representative reviews the addendum carefully and finds that two areas of interest listed in the addendum align with the organization’s research priorities.

The addendum notes that organizations are permitted to submit more than one expression of interest, or EOI. So, Organization E decides immediately to begin developing two EOIs, one for each area of interest it would like to pursue for funding.

SLIDE 40: Pathways to Partnership

The case studies you have just seen, show you how, in just one country, USAID offers different ways potential partners can come together to collaborate on development solutions.

These five different fictional organizations began by reviewing the Mission website and the Mission’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy. Then, based on each organization’s unique priorities and expertise, they explored and found different opportunities that fit their needs *and* USAID’s strategies and goals.

In our fictional case studies, the organizations:

- Commented on draft notices of funding opportunities;
- Submitted expressions of interest through Broad Agency Announcement addenda;
- Developed concept notes for activity ideas to submit through Annual Program Statement addenda;
- And looked for experienced partners to work with on larger funding opportunities.

Remember: While some of these funding opportunities and co-creation processes lead to funded awards, others provide partners the chance to build relationships with USAID and other organizations around shared goals.

DIVIDER SLIDE

SLIDE 41: Key Points

We covered a lot of information in this module. Let us review some of the key points you learned.

- USAID relies on partnerships with a variety of organizations—including public, private, academic, and nonprofit organizations—to achieve its goals. The Agency works in several technical areas in more than 100 countries across the world.
- Potential partners follow four steps to explore funding opportunities to partner with USAID:

- First, learn about Agency priorities and strategies;
- Second, follow the Business Forecast;
- Third, explore rolling opportunities;
- And fourth, track open opportunities.
- It is important to begin exploring opportunities 6 to 12 months before you plan to respond to a funding opportunity, because USAID plans activities as early as two years in advance.
- Smaller and newer organizations can learn about USAID programming by partnering with larger, more experienced partners.
- You and your team will find many different pathways to partnership with the Agency. There are opportunities suitable for organizations with many different priorities, skills, and levels of experience.

SLIDE 42: Resources

Here are several resources we shared throughout this presentation. You also can find some of these resources and tips in the “Quick Reference Guide” for this module.

SLIDE 43: Thank You

Thank you for taking time to learn about the different pathways to partnership with USAID and how to explore funding opportunities.

We hope this training module has helped you better understand how to explore funding opportunities and ways to partner with USAID.

Remember: It takes time to develop a successful partnership that achieves both your organization’s and the Agency’s goals.

To learn more, we invite you and your staff to view other modules available in the “How to Work with USAID” training series.

Slide 44: Credits

This module was produced by the United States Agency for International Development. The presentation team is comprised of staff from USAID and the Partnerships Incubator.

USAID thanks all the individuals who contributed their time and ideas toward the development of this training module.

Please email any feedback or questions you may have to IndustryLiaison@USAID.gov.